

REMARKS

The Final Office Action of October 23, 2008, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10-18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Helot et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,264,488).

With regard to the rejections over Helot, claim 1 recites that "the alignment means comprises an aperture in the cradle member at least partly surrounded by a guide wall such that in use the electrical contactor assembly is guided by the wall when the base member is moved relative to the cradle member from the first position to the second position." In view of the clarifying amendments made above, Applicant contends that these features are clearly disclosed and should not be ignored.

Applicant respectfully submits that Helot does not disclose or suggest alignment means that includes a guide wall surrounding an aperture, which guide wall guides the contactor assembly when the base member is moved relative to the cradle member from the first to the second position. More specifically, Helot has a contactor assembly rigidly mounted to the base member as seen in Figs 10A-10C. It is clear from these figures that the connection to the connector 30 of the laptop occurs via a pivoting angled motion. Therefore the edges of doors 80, 82 or aperture 46 itself cannot properly act as guides since clearance is needed between them and the contactor to allow for their angled relation during pivoting. If there is clearance, there cannot also be guiding, and thus claim 1 is not anticipated.

Moreover, claim 1 has been amended as set forth above to recite that the contactor assembly is resiliently mounted with respect to the base member, thus

further defining the invention to achieve close guiding. The resilient mounting of the contactor assembly results in closure movement that is linear (perpendicular to the underside of the computer) rather than angled, despite the pivoting motion of the base member relative to the cradle, and the linear motion it achieves reduces wear on the contactor and terminal on the computer. Applicant respectfully submits that this feature is not shown in Helot and that claim 1 is thus not anticipated by the cited prior art.

Claim 18 has been amended as set forth above to further recite that "moving from the first position to the second position both closes the apparatus such that the portable computer cannot be removed from within the apparatus and causes the electrical connector assembly to engage the computer to allow power and/or data-transfer connections between the docking apparatus and the computer." Thus, claim 18 explicitly refers to the cradle member housing the portable computer and the cradle and base member preventing its removal when in the second (closed) position. In contrast, the primary reference relied upon by the Examiner, Helot , discloses a docking station that is "open". Specifically, in Helot the cradle member 40 is open and may be pushed down whether or not the laptop 10 is correctly located on it or not. This risks damage being caused to the connector assembly and/or the terminal. The advantage of the arrangement defined in claim 18 is that a single motion simultaneously makes the electrical connection to the docking station and improves the security of the device -- the user cannot forget to secure the computer if they want to dock it. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully contends that claim 18 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Application regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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